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Mr. SCHIFF addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. FOLEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WATSON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WATSON of California, addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

INTRODUCING LEGISLATION TO STRENGTHEN NUCLEAR SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING PROGRAMS AT AMERICAN UNIVERSITIES, COLLEGES, AND NATIONAL LABORATORIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mrs. BIGGERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. BIGGERT. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce legislation to strengthen nuclear science and engineering programs at American universities, colleges, and National Laboratories.

Nuclear science and engineering in the United States is a 50-year-old success story that has been written by some of the brightest minds the world has ever known. America has truly been blessed as the world leader in this area. But even as there is renewed interest in nuclear energy as one of the solutions to our Nation's energy problems, there are fewer Americans entering the nuclear science and engineering field, and even fewer institutions left with the capacity to train them.

In fact, the supply of 4-year-trained nuclear scientists has hit a 35-year low, and there are only 28 universities that operate research reactors, less than half the number there were in 1980.

□ 1845

These statistics tell but the beginning of the story, however. Current projections are that 25 percent to 30 percent of the nuclear industry's workforce and 76 percent of the nuclear workforce at our national laboratories are eligible to retire in the next 5 years. And a majority of the 28 operating university reactors will have to be relicensed in the next 5 years, a lengthy process that most universities cannot afford.

When I consider these facts, I wonder how long we can continue the success story that is nuclear science in the United States. Not long is my guess, and that is why action must be taken to reverse this troubling trend.

That is why I am introducing the Department of Energy University Nuclear Science and Engineering Act. This legislation is the House companion bill to legislation introduced in the Senate by my friend and colleague, Senator JEFF BINGAMAN.

This bill provides financial support for the operation, maintenance, and improvement of expensive, yet essential, university nuclear research reactors; resources for the professional development of faculty in the field of nuclear science and engineering; incentives for students to enter the field and opportunities for education and training through fellowships and interaction with national laboratory staff; and general research funds for students, faculty and national laboratory staff.

Now, more than ever, nuclear scientists and engineers are needed for much more than simply operating nuclear power plants. Trained in American universities and national laboratories, these specialists are needed to help design, safely dispose of, and monitor nuclear waste, both civilian and military; to develop radio isotopes for the thousands of medical procedures performed every day; to operate and maintain the Nation's existing fission reactors and nuclear power plants; to help stem the proliferation of nuclear weapons and respond to any future nuclear crisis worldwide; and to design, operate, and monitor current and future naval reactors.

These are not small tasks, but if we continue on the path we are on, there will not be enough people to do the job down the line.

The legislation I am introducing today incorporates a number of approaches recommended by reports from the National Research Council, the Department of Energy and its Nuclear Energy Research Advisory Committee, all leaders in the nuclear field. The bill advances four components essential to strong nuclear science and engineering programs: students, faculty, facilities, and finally research.

Mr. Speaker, my written statement goes into greater detail about these components, so I want to conclude by saying that this legislation is important, not only to a handful of American universities, but to our national labs,

our industry, our Navy, our national security and those engaged in life-saving medical research involving radiation.

This legislation ensures that America continues to realize the benefits of a competent, well-trained, highly skilled nuclear workforce. More important, this bill is critical if we are to maintain America's standing as number one in the world in the area of nuclear science and engineering.

Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle who are cosponsors of this important legislation, including the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. BALDWIN), the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. BARTLETT), the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KNOLLENBERG), the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. EHLERS), the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. SIMPSON), the gentlewoman from Oregon (Ms. HOOLEY), the gentlewoman from New Mexico (Mrs. WILSON), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. STRICKLAND), the gentleman from Idaho (Mr. OTTER), and the gentleman from California (Mr. CALVERT).

Mr. Speaker, I urge the rest of my colleagues to join us in this endeavor by cosponsoring the bill.

TROPICAL STORM ALLISON

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. STERNS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise this evening to talk about the recent flooding in my hometown of Houston and the devastation it has caused. I know the national news has covered some of it, but watching my colleagues around the country with their devastation in previous years, I had no idea until this last week and this last weekend what major flood waters can do.

Starting last Tuesday, June 5, Tropical Storm Allison made landfall on the Southeast Texas coastline, bringing with it 5 days of rain and damages estimated to be \$1 billion or more and the countless loss of property and disruption of people's lives and as many as 20 people have lost their lives.

While many areas of Houston and Harris County have significant flooding, our 29th district, that I am honored to represent, was hit particularly hard, because of the residential nature of our district. Many of the city's bayous run through our district, and two of these bayous, Hunting and Greens bayous, overflowed their banks causing widespread flooding.

Over 10,000 residents were forced to leave their homes by Greens Bayou alone, as flooding in the area reached a 1,000 year level. Even those who were not flooded out of their homes suffered thousands of dollars worth of damage to their homes in personal belongings.

The damage from this storm, however, is not limited just to our residential areas. The whole community has been hit, area hospitals, not only our regional hospitals on Interstate 10, but

the Texas Medical Center suffered interruptions in power that make treating existing patients along with flood-related casualties extremely difficult. Several were forced to close because of the flooding problems in the Texas Medical Center.

There are backups working now. But over the weekend, when you can imagine with the devastation that we had, the communications across the city were disrupted as well, with Houston's emergency communications network knocked out; and fire and rescue workers were forced to often rely on handheld radios.

Over 100,000 residents were without phone service and the 911 system was overwhelmed, and only quick action by our Harris County employees prevented loss of more long-distance and cellular communications.

Even today, 15,000 Houston and Harris County residents, including our district office, are without phone service, as the central office in Houston was under 5 feet of water for most of the weekend.

Even though classes are out for the summer and schools have not yet begun for the summer school, our public schools have not been spared. Over 300 Houston Independent School Districts have suffered flood damage.

Other districts were not spared. North Forest ISD is now using two of their schools that were not hit for shelters, manned by the Red Cross and school employees, suffered a great deal of damage, including office equipment and computers.

Sheldon Independent School District suffered serious flooding in their whole district, and only two schools were not flooded. Right now, the waters have receded; and the Federal Emergency Management Agency is on the ground, helping those who have lost their homes and their property and their businesses to rebuild.

Disaster recovery centers, where residents can go and begin accessing Federal aid, are being established in time through this week and will be up and running, and people have begun the long process of putting their lives back together.

While we cannot prevent a catastrophe of this magnitude, there are actions we can take both locally and in Washington to lessen the impact of future flooding.

At the local level, I encourage every resident possible to purchase flood insurance. It is affordable. The average cost about \$350 a year.

And for more information, they can call 1-888-CALL-FLOOD or go online which is <http://www.fema.gov/nfip>.

On the Federal level, we can do more. For the last several years, funding for our Harris County Flood Control has been steady, but we know we need to do better.

I have walked the streets yesterday and today visiting with our FEMA representatives in areas in Aldine, Mesa Road and Sheldon, to CE King areas and seeing the devastation, Mr. Speaker, and I encourage my constituents and all people to call the 1-800 number

for FEMA, 1-800-462-9029 to make sure they get their information there so FEMA can do the job that we expect them to do.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the gentleman from Louisiana (Mr. TAUZIN).

Mr. TAUZIN. Mr. Speaker, I just wanted to take a minute to thank the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) for the special order, because as the gentleman knows residents of Louisiana suffered along with residents of Texas. All over my district, we had similar flooding.

This morning, the President declared a disaster area in the parishes that I represent in South Louisiana. In my hometown, we had a rain gauge that measured 38 inches of rainfall at one location, in my hometown, an amazing amount of rain. No one could have prepared for it.

I want to thank the gentleman for reading those numbers. I hope people have listened carefully. FEMA is on the job, and we hope relief is coming soon.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, whatever time I have left, I know that Storm Allison moved from Texas to Louisiana, and we are seeing that devastation along the Gulf Coast, and I know we will be here to provide that funding.

DISCUSSING SPEECH OF COMPTROLLER GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES, DAVID WALKER

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. GRUCCI). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. HORN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. HORN. Mr. Speaker, I am going to discuss and I am putting in the RECORD this evening a very fine address of the Comptroller General of the United States, David Walker. He has a 15-year term, as you know. He is part of the legislative branch, and he has had a great career before joining us. He is a certified public accountant.

He was a Assistant Secretary of Labor under President Reagan for Pension and Welfare Benefit Programs, and I just want to talk about some excerpts from his address recently.

Speaking for his agency, the United States General Accounting Office, he noted, "We do not keep the books and records of the Federal Government. That is the primary responsibility of the chief financial officers of the various departments and agencies in the government. And the Congress is our primary client."

American people are our beneficial clients. Our mission is to help maximize the performance and assure the accountability of the Federal Government for the benefit of the American people."

"We are in the accountability business. Many people like accountability until they are the ones being held accountable."

He continued on that, "While we should have zero tolerance for fraud, waste, abuse and mismanagement, it will never be zero."

"We perform audits, investigations evaluations, policy analyses, and provide legal services to the Congress."

He notes that over 90 percent of his work in the GAO with his excellent colleagues is done at either the mandate of Congress or a request of Congress.

"As a result, we are very client focused. We are also very results oriented, and we strive to lead by example."

"Being the leading accountability organization in the United States, and arguably one of the leading in the world, we believe that we have a responsibility to be as good or better than anybody else that we evaluate, or else we would be a hypocrite, and none of us wants to be called a hypocrite."

Mr. Speaker, I will now mention some of the points he made in both dealing with management and dealing with our major thrust, which must be the infrastructure, the human infrastructure of the executive branch. We are losing first-rate people, thousands a year.

And he goes on to note, this is a major thing for Congress and the General Accounting Office to do these and concern these and get an incentive system where the senior civil servants can help manage the world's largest complex information, which is the executive branch of the United States.

He believes that where certain key trends and are undeniable and which have significant implications for the United States as well as many other industrialized nations around the world; these include the following: First, globalization. Globalization of markets, information and enterprises. There are no islands in a wired interconnected and, yes, interdependent world.

Changing dynamics, aging societies, longer life spans, decreasing worker-to-retiree ratios.

Third, changing security threats. The Cold War is over, and we won.

The next is rapidly evolving technology. These new technologies provide opportunities to increase productivity and decrease costs.

Quality-of-life considerations are also of increasing importance. From education to the environment to work-family issues to urban sprawl, quality of life is becoming increasingly important for many people.

Rising healthcare costs, we all know that is a major problem.

Last but not least, evolution, devolving more activities closer to the people and from the government to the private and not-for-profit sectors leads to shared responsibility and more difficulties associated with accountability.

□ 1900

Although there are differences sometimes between the Congressional Budget Office, the Comptroller General notes that the first one he is going to touch on is the long-range budget challenges.

While the CBO, the Congressional Budget Office, most recent 10-year projections showed higher projected services over the next 10 years, the fact is